**RISL: Consultancy Protocol – Modified from *National School Reform Faculty***

**1. Initial Presentation (5 minutes) Presenter presents a quick overview of his/her challenge. Frames one question for the response group to address.**

**2. Clarifying Questions (5 minutes) Response group members ask questions of the presenter that have factual answers of a phrase or two in length. They ask the presenter “who, what, where, when and how much” questions.**

Note: Clarifying Questions do not include “why?” or “what other approaches have you considered?” questions. The purpose of clarifying questions is to help the questioner better understand the presenters’ situation and their handouts (if any have been distributed); these questions are not likely to offer any “food for thought” to the presenter.

**3. Probing Questions (5 minutes) Response group members ask questions of the presenter that help the presenter clarify and extend his/her own thinking about the matter that has been presented to the group.**

The group asks open-ended questions such as:

* Why...?
* What other approachea have you considered regarding...?”
* What do you think would happen if...?

Answers to probing questions are usually longer than answers to clarifying questions. The presenters may need to think for a few moments before responding. Presenters may choose to not respond - other than to say that they may need to think more about the question.

**4. Non-presenter Discussion (10 minutes) The response group talks with each other while the presenter listens and takes notes. The presenter is not allowed to speak at this time (except to answer a clarifying question if one arises).**

It’s usually helpful for the presenter to move his/her chair back slightly away from the group where they can more easily attend to listening and note taking. The response group refers to the presenter in the third person in order to help maintain this separation throughout this section. This often feels awkward but it is only for a few minutes and the benefits can be substantial. Response group members may offer their analyses of the situation and possible, never definitive, ideas about solutions. They may characterize their comments as “warm” or “cool” feedback.

**5. Presenter Responds (10 minutes) The presenter responds to what the response group members said in the previous section.**

The purpose of this section is *not* for the presenter to respond to everything the response group members said. Instead, the purpose is for the presenter to talk about what he/she heard that was most important to them, and any thoughts or questions that were stimulated by the group discussion. Once the presenter has responded and wishes to engage in a more free-flowing dialogue, with additional comments, ideas and questions, he/she explicitly indicates so to the group .

**6. Reflection/Debrief (5 minutes) The presenter begins this section, in which the group debriefs the process.**

Often hearing others talk about how the process worked for them helps people see the value of using a structured protocol.